(b) whether it is also a fact that an exportcess of Rs. 300 levied on per tonne of iron ore is virtually nothing compared to the rise in spot market iron ore prices; and

(c) if so, the steps Government proposes to take to protect and conserve iron ore reserves in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. T. SUBBARAMIREDDY): (a) Under the National Mineral Policy in 1993, mining for non-fuel and non-atomic minerals has been thrown open for private sector investment and an Indian National or a Company as defined in sub-section 3(1) of the Companies Act, 1956 can undertake mining based on the economic viability of the project. Mining is a stand-alone activity. The Central Government, based on the State Governmnet recommendations, accords prior approval for grant of mineral concessions in terms of the provisions of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 and Rules framed there under. The export of minerals including iron ore is as per the EXIM policy of the Government.

(b) The levy of export cess is a fiscal measure by Government and not linked to the movement of spot prices of iron ore.

(c) The Government is of the view that management of mineral resources is closely integrated with the overall strategy of development of minerals whereby exploitation of minerals is to be guided by long-term national goals and perspectives. The country has sufficient resources of iron ore at 25.25 billion tonnes and these are increasing with further exploration.

Mines of BALCO in Chhattisgarh

tI005. SHRISATYAVRATCHATURVEDI:
SHRI MOTILALVORA:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Bharat Aluminium Company Ltd. (BALCO) had applied to increase the production by four times in its bauxite mines at Sarguja in Chhattisgarh;

(b) whether it is a fact that importance has not been given to environment and wild life neither in BALCO nor in Sarguja itself by the Company;

(c) the total number of employers working in the Company and out of them the number of local people having participation in it; and

(d) the steps Government is taking to provide employment to local people in the Company and to play active role for environment and wild life?

THE MINISTEROF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY): (a) Bharat Aluminium Company Limited (BALCO) has informed that it has applied for increase in production in its Bauxite Mines at Sarguja in Chhattisgarh from 4.5 lakh metric tones per annum (MTPA) to 7.5 lakh MTPA.

(b) BALCO has informed that it is giving utmost importance to environment. Moreover, mining and other operations are being done in terms of the mining plan, as approved by the Indian Brueau of Mines in compliance with Environmental Laws.

tOriginal notice of the question was received in Hindi.